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ABSTRACT

Although Ontario's Ministry of Education currently funds a variety of literacy programs, the province of Ontario (Canada) currently has no overall policy, evaluation process, or agreed-upon definition of adult literacy to guide further development in the field. When developing a comprehensive government policy regarding adult literacy in Ontario, policymakers must recognize that adult literacy exists in the broader context of adult basic education and adult education. Policymakers must address the following contextual issues: lifelong learning, equity of outcome, integrated services, and the financial implications of policy decisions. The policy developed must recognize that literacy is first and foremost a human service whose delivery must be tailored to give consideration to Ontario's multicultural character. Policy decisions regarding adult literacy must be developed with consideration for the following issues: access, language rights, diverse and flexible programs, support services, field development and support, and shared responsibility. (Appended are lists of the following: literacy and skills training programs funding by Canada's ministries of education and colleges and universities; Ministry of Education-funded adult literacy programs; people consulted during the project; and issues identified during the consultations.) (MN)

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TOWARDS AN ADULT LITERACY POLICY FOR ONTARIO - A DISCUSSION PAPER

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September, 1991

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TOWARDS AN ADULT LITERACY POLICY FOR ONTARIO -

A DISCUSSION PAPER

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the 1980s, adult literacy emerged not only as an issue of developing countries, but also of industrialized countries. Several international and national developments served to focus public attention on the issue. This awareness reached a peak during International Literacy Year - 1990. This year was intended as a call to action for the decade of the '90s. Two statements which emerged from the world conference at Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990 were:

- World Declaration on Education for All; and
- Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs.

These statements taken together provide a global blueprint for literacy and basic education work until the year 2001.

The Ministry of Education has approved a multi-phase, three-year project to develop adult literacy policy, quality program guidelines, and criteria for program evaluation and learner assessment. This initiative is timely, not only because of its fit with the international timetable, but also because of the renewed interest of the federal government in literacy, training and lifelong learning.

Since 1986, when Ontario approved the Plan for Adult Basic Literacy, the adult literacy field has grown from a handful of community programs to a broad and diverse delivery field. This rapid development has now slowed and the field is moving into a stage of restraint and consolidation. Questions of program quality, accountability, evaluation, appropriate learner assessment and others are being raised and debated by practitioners as well as government.

The Ministry of Education funds a variety of literacy programs in response to identified needs in the community and workplace. However, there is currently no overall policy, evaluation process or agreed upon definition of adult literacy to guide further development of the field.

This paper is a first step in the policy development process.

2. PROGRAM CONTEXT

In the 1960s and 1970s, the federal government, in partnership with the provinces was a major funder of adult basic education programs. Withdrawal of most of that support in the late 1970s and early 1980s stimulated other organizations and individuals to provide adult literacy services. Nowhere was the variety of program service agencies greater than in Ontario. These agencies included school boards, community groups, libraries, colleges, literacy councils, and private providers. However, there was little government funding for programs.

In 1982, changes to continuing education funding were announced to school boards. Changes in funding criteria provided an incentive for boards to provide, without charge, adult basic literacy/numeracy for adults to Grade 8 level of competency, citizenship and ESL/FSL for landed immigrants. Furthermore, no provincial funding was to be provided for general interest courses, and fees were not to be charged for credit courses. School boards were designated as primary deliverers of adult basic education for funding purposes. The extent of school board involvement, however, varied considerably across the province. Community groups were not supported by provincial funds except for ESL and ESL/literacy programs.

In September, 1986 the Ontario Government Plan for Adult Basic Literacy (ABL) was announced. This plan outlined broad strategies for literacy program delivery and support. The broad objectives for the provincial literacy strategy were stated as:

- full, equal and responsible citizenship; and
- promotion of employment and economic growth.

In September 1987, the Ministry of Skills Development was designated as the "lead" ministry for literacy and, soon after, the Literacy Branch was established. In January 1990, the Literacy Branch was transferred from Skills Development to the Ministry of Education. For the first time, the main providers of adult basic literacy were funded through the same ministry.

Literacy is an educational issue, but it is not just an educational issue. Literacy is also a social issue, an economic issue, a cultural issue and a political issue. First and foremost, however, it is a human issue. Literacy has to do with the realization of human potential. Literacy policy and strategies, therefore, must consider the contexts in which people live, work and carry on the activities of their daily lives.

Programs funded by the Ministry of Education are carried out in many different settings. These include programs in educational institutions, in the community, and in the workplace. Programs are designed to meet the cultural and educational traditions, aspirations, and needs of Anglophones, Francophones and Native People. Other target groups include:

- people on social assistance
- people with disabilities
- offenders
- older workers
- visible minorities
- unemployed workers, and
- women, especially sole support mothers.

In 1990/91, the Literacy Branch provided over $41 million in transfer payments to colleges, community groups, school boards, umbrella organizations, employers and labour organizations to support a variety of literacy programs and services. The Ministry of Education spends an additional $11 million to fund adult literacy programs in school boards. The Independent Learning Centre, also within the Ministry of Education, offers Adult Basic Literacy and Adult Basic English courses through correspondence. The Pre-employment Preparation (PEP) Program of FUTURES also provides some literacy training to youth.

The grant programs within the Literacy Branch are :

- Ontario Basic Skills (OBS)
- Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace (OBSW)
- Ontario Community Literacy (OCL)
- Literacy Field Development and Support.

The major features of these programs and other literacy initiatives funded by the Ministry of Education are given in Appendix I. In addition to the Ministry of Education, other ministries are involved in the provision of literacy services and skills training programs, as well as in language training for newcomers. Such ministries include: Colleges and Universities, Skills Development, Correctional Services, and Citizenship. In recent years, the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Labour have made money available to the Ministry of Education for initiatives designed to provide literacy training for social assistance recipients (SARs) and displaced workers.

The interface of literacy with so many other ministries emphasizes the need for a broad government policy on adult literacy.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

The Ministry of Education's recent commitment to the principles of lifelong learning, equity of outcome and integrated services creates a coherent policy context for determining future directions for adult literacy.

3.1 LIFELONG LEARNING

"Lifelong learning" underlines the importance of seeing learning as a continuing process through life from birth to death whereby people actively develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes. The term is often used or confused with "lifelong education", "continuing education", and "recurrent education". A lifelong learning system refers to the various arrangements and structures which facilitate lifelong learning. This is what is usually meant by "lifelong education". One of the best definitions of lifelong education is that of Dave (1976):

> Lifelong education seeks to view education in its totality. It covers formal, nonformal, and informal patterns of education, and attempts to integrate and articulate all structures and stages of education along the vertical (temporal) and horizontal (spatial) dimensions. It is also characterized by flexibility in time, place, content, and techniques of learning and hence calls for self-directed learning, sharing of one's enlightenment with others, and adopting varied learning styles and strategies. (pp. 35-36)[1]

Literacy is one of the foundation skills which opens the doors to lifelong learning.

[1] *Dave, R.H. (ed). 1976. Foundations of Lifelong Education. Pergamon Press, New York.*

3.1.1 Some Characteristics of Lifelong Education and Implications for Adult Literacy Work

. Lifelong education covers the entire life span of an individual.

- Literacy work accommodates people of all ages who want to learn.

. The home plays a crucial role in starting the process of lifelong learning through family learning.

- Literacy work recognizes the importance of family or intergenerational literacy as an essential part of literacy development.

. The community plays an important role in the lifelong learning system as people (children, youth, adults) begin to interact with it.

- Literacy work is seen as a crucial part of community development and education especially for those who have not had access to mainstream programs in the past.

. Educational institutions (schools, colleges) are only one group of deliverers within a lifelong learning system.

- Literacy work has a variety of delivery agents and is carried out where people live and work, e.g. workplace sites, public housing areas, extended care homes, in various sites using distance education technology.

. Lifelong education is universal in character and represents democratization of education.

- Literacy work acknowledges the right of all adults to a basic education.

. Lifelong education is characterized by its flexibility and diversity in the content, techniques, and time of learning.

- Literacy work offers activities and instruction at different times of the day, in a variety of locations, and uses content and techniques appropriate to learners' needs and interests.

- Lifelong education provides opportunities to counteract shortcomings of learning within the existing system of education.

    - Literacy work provides an alternative means of helping adults to learn who have fallen through the cracks of existing services.

- The aim of lifelong education is to maintain and improve the quality of life.

    - Literacy work encourages the development of characteristics, such as self-esteem and confidence, which carry over into social and other aspects of life.

- Lifelong education is an organizing principle for the provision of an inclusive and comprehensive system of education.

    - Literacy work provides the foundation skills required to actively engage other aspects of the system and is an integral part of it.

In Ontario, most of the above characteristics of lifelong education are already present in adult literacy work. Lifelong learning has often been attributed to the more highly educated members of society- people who can easily discover or know their way around the system. Extending the concept to include all educational activity would change our viewpoints on certain topics. For example, attendance and withdrawal rates of learners in adult literacy programs are matters of concern. In fact, many adults return to programs they have left or go to new ones. This pattern would not be considered unusual in a lifelong learning context.

Some literacy groups have openly acknowledged the importance of lifelong learning:

> In our culture, learning is a lifelong path of which there is no completeness. This path of learning must be available to all people within the circle; children, adolescents, adults and elders. This circle of life which encompasses learning is never broken, and it must continue to ensure the survival of Native people.
>
> The Ontario Native Literacy Coalition

3.1.2 Policy Implications

- Educational entitlement of adult learners.
- Support access to learning and the transitions across the various sectors of the lifelong learning system.
- Recognize prior learning experiences and skills of adults.

3.2 EQUITY OF OUTCOME

"Equity of outcome" entails a different perspective on access. This has come about because of the Canadian Charter of Rights which replaced the Canadian Bill of Rights. In the latter, individuals were to be treated equally under the law. That is, regardless of differences, people were to be treated in the same way. The Charter, however, calls for "equal benefits" or outcomes as well as "equal protection" under the law. The Charter further recognizes that systemic barriers may actually impede individual opportunity. In other words, in the past, treating people equally meant treating everyone the same. Now, to treat everyone the same way means ignoring valid differences and needs. Systemic barriers to opportunity have to be removed to ensure genuine access and the realization of human potential. Positive interventions are thus required in order to level the playing field for disadvantaged individuals or groups to achieve desired outcomes.

3.2.1 Implications for Adult Literacy Work

Many adults with literacy problems are poor and face multiple disadvantages in their lives. The implementation of the principle of equity of outcome means removing the financial, geographic and institutional barriers that restrict access to educational opportunities. It also means helping to overcome the psycho-social and cultural barriers that may impede the learning of individuals and the achievement of their educational and occupational goals.

Recognition that outcomes in literacy work are varied and include: personal and social affective achievements; cognitive achievements; socio-economic achievements; and achievements in new activities.

3.2.2 Policy Implications

a) Affirmation of the 1986 ABL Plan:

- to encourage broad access to general literacy programs for groups with special needs;
- to provide customized programs to meet the specific needs of defined target groups and their communities;
- to support program flexibility and diversity of delivery models so that adult learning needs and styles can be effectively accommodated.

b) Recognition of language rights for Francophones and aboriginal peoples.

c) Recognition of need to learn in one's first language.

d) Emphasis on adult learning goals and outcomes.

3.3 INTEGRATED SERVICES

Adults with fewer literacy skills often have special needs which, unless met, make learning difficult. Displaced workers requiring basic skill upgrading may also have special needs. Literacy cuts across the boundaries of many government departments in terms of both program delivery and support services. Integrated services are necessary to avoid duplication, to identify gaps, and to make the system less confusing and more helpful for adult learners.

3.3.1 Implications for Adult Literacy Work

- Cooperative endeavours between literacy workers, government, and social helping agencies need to be encouraged.
- Services such as information hotlines, counselling, assessment, outreach and recruitment need to be supported.
- Public awareness of literacy needs and the impact of these on different sectors of government and society needs to be encouraged. Plain language initiatives, for example, extend into many other sectors of society.

3.3.2 Policy Implications

- Recognize bridging points and transitions between literacy, formal education and training programs so that adult learners may progress through and across the system.

3.4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If the values of lifelong learning, equity of outcome, and integrated services are to be realized in adult literacy, the inadequate level of existing funding for programs needs to be addressed. Specifically, the government needs to:

- identify what services need to be funded to support adult literacy;
- determine adequate funding levels to support increased access and effective outcomes in adult literacy;
- explore how integrated services are to be cost-shared across ministries.

4. DEFINING LITERACY

> Literacy, properly understood, is not only a skill for reading the word, but for understanding the world and playing one's part in transforming it into a more just, equitable and congenial place to live.
>
> Federico Mayor, 1990

4.1 LITERACY - A MEANS, NOT AN END

The simplest definition of literacy is: "the ability to read and write". However, over the last decade, the term "literacy" has become so value-laden and interpreted in so many ways that it has become almost impossible to arrive at a commonly agreed upon definition. Numeracy, often linked with literacy, is the ability to perform simple arithmetical functions. Literacy and numeracy comprise basic skills which provide the foundations for more complex learning activities. Literacy cannot be divorced from other skills of language such as speaking, active listening, and critical thinking. These skills do not occur in a vacuum. They occur in context. Adults have acquired life experience which has been influenced by their cultural, political, social and economic circumstances. These circumstances influence: attitudes towards learning; degree of motivation; and the extent to which adults participate in society.

Adults who attend literacy programs do so for a variety of reasons. Some may want to read to their children or help with their homework. Some may want to be able to write to grandchildren. Some may want to improve their spelling and learn how to write paragraphs or notes at work. Some may want to enrol in further academic upgrading courses and require a brush-up of basic skills. Some may want to take on a position of responsibility as a volunteer member in a community organization. Some may need to learn specific technical skills related to the workplace or future occupation. Some may want to enjoy a more productive leisure time by learning to read recipes, or novels. Some may want to improve their mother-tongue literacy in order to strengthen their cultural heritage and identity. These motivations and needs are personal, social, cultural, academic, economic, technical, and community oriented.

Adult literacy programs try to meet learners on their own terms whether adults meet collectively (in small groups or classes); or individually (in one-to-one tutorial situations). Literacy programs help develop self-esteem and confidence; they help teach adults how to learn and thus provide a foundation for lifelong learning. Within the lifelong learning context, it is

important to recognize that there is a continuum of literacy skills ranging from the total inability to read or write through to the ability to process complex information and to appreciate the literature of one's own and other countries.

The literacy continuum in Appendix II, shows the acquisition of different kinds of literacy skills by level (basic, intermediate, advanced) and function.

> ***Functional literacy*** refers to the ability to perform the tasks required by daily living. Basic literacy is a means to functional literacy.
>
> ***Active literacy*** refers to the integration of communication skills, critical thinking and numeracy together with the acquisition of cultural and social knowledge that enables adults to participate in society.
>
> ***Technical literacy*** refers mainly to the specialized skills that are necessary in order to fulfil specific tasks in the workplace.
>
> ***Humane literacy*** refers to the appreciation of various forms of literature and an understanding of philosophical ideas.

These types of literacy should be found in different degrees of concentration along the continuum. They are not tied to fixed positions.

If one sees literacy as a continuum of skills, then questions of definition should become largely irrelevant. The issue becomes one of providing a diverse range of quality programs and services to meet the varying learning needs of the population to be served. Literacy practice should be learner-centred, and learners should actively participate in helping identify their skills, the competencies they hope to achieve and the content of their learning. Competencies can be identified and mileposts established along the skills continuum. Learners' skills can then be better articulated in relation to personal goals and achievements. However, the mandates of the various programs also need to be articulated so that learners will gain the most benefit from the programs in place.

4.2 OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Appendix II shows how the various literacy programs within the Ministry of Education fall on a literacy continuum. Most programs operate on the lower end of the continuum and are designed to provide basic and functional literacy skills. These skills include:

- reading
- writing
- oral communication (speaking and active listening)
- critical thinking
- social or life skills
- numeracy
- basic science
- citizenship.

Learners should be actively engaged in the acquisition of these skills along the continuum. As learners move up through the continuum more complex technical, academic and literary skills are acquired.

At an operational level in Ontario, "Basic Literacy" for the most part is interpreted by government guidelines to include skills to the Grade 8 level. The achievement of skills equivalent to Grade 8 marks the transition between non-credit and credit courses for school boards and the ILC. OBS/FBO has 4 levels, two of which go beyond the "Grade 8" transition point up to the Grade 12 level. The other programs are geared to more specific needs and do not neatly fit into a "grade" system.

The skills continuum makes sense in terms of lifelong learning, and pulls together the various literacy programs of the Ministry. The higher levels of OBS are involved in teaching more advanced skills. There are practical problems, however, for learners in the lack of recognition and articulation between the various programs, and in the outside world. Thus, there are other barriers to participating fully in society, even for learners who have acquired skills.

5. POLICY ISSUES

A comprehensive government policy on adult literacy should recognize certain underlying assumptions:

- Literacy provision is first and foremost a human service. The emphasis in policy development and program provision must be on the client. Clients include adult learners and potential adult learners.

- The children and youth in school today will be tomorrow's adults. Literacy rates in the adult population will not improve as long as youth leave school with inadequate basic skills. The demographic shifts in the Ontario population will require that the younger generation learn how to learn and be motivated to learn for the economic and social conditions they will face in their lifetimes.

- The multicultural character of Ontario requires programs that allow learners the options to maintain and build upon their linguistic and cultural heritage. This must be so for Francophones and Native groups. For immigrants who are illiterate in their own language, mother tongue literacy may have to be introduced as a bridge towards official language literacy.

- As literacy cuts across many different sectors of government and society, consultation, cooperation and coordination around literacy issues and initiatives are essential among various government levels and sectors and in the field at regional and local levels.

- A policy on adult literacy cannot stand alone. It should be nested within policies which address the larger fields of adult basic education (ABE) and adult education (or continuing education).

5.1 ACCESS

All adult residents of Ontario should have access, without charge, to publicly supported basic education programs.

This entitlement is a human right based on various declarations of the United Nations and its member agencies. The acknowledgement of this right underlies all adult literacy work. In Ontario, adults are entitled to seven years of secondary education (credit courses) through the regular

school system without payment of fees. This right should be extended to adult programs providing basic skills.

Many adults did not have the opportunity to complete a basic education. Others were left behind in the system and need a second chance. Latest statistics claim a high school drop out rate of 30 percent. The Statistics Canada Survey showed that 17 percent of Ontario adults have considerable difficulty with daily reading tasks; a further 21 percent have difficulties with more complex reading tasks. This entitlement should enable those adults who want to pursue their education to do so.

Issues

- **Should the right to basic education be legislated?**

- **If so:**
  - **a) Who would be the mandated providers?**
  - **b) What would be the time entitlement for learners?[1]**
  - **c) What are the legal implications for government, and local providers if programs are not provided for the period of the entitlement?**
  - **d) Can service be made universally accessible throughout the province in a time of restraint when there are existing waiting lists for service?**
  - **e) Can support services be guaranteed for adults with special needs in order to ensure equity of outcome?**
  - **f) What would be the rights and responsibilities of program providers?**
  - **g) Is there a right of choice of program for the client?**

- **If not:**
  - **(a) Should the government try to ensure "reasonable" access to those who want to learn?**
  - **(b) Where should scarce funds be allocated to ensure equity of outcome - to the most disadvantaged economically, to minority groups, to people with disabilities, to displaced workers, to people in remote locations?**

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[1] *The province of Quebec has legislated the right to basic education. Adults are entitled to 2000 hours of instruction for basic literacy and numeracy work. This entitlement can be extended under special circumstances.*

5.2 LANGUAGE RIGHTS

- ***Francophones should have access to literacy programs in their own language.***

- ***Native Peoples should have access to literacy programs in their own languages as needed.***

- ***People in the Deaf community should have access to literacy programs in their own sign language (ASL or LSQ)[1].***

- ***Immigrants who are illiterate in their mother tongue should have access to literacy education in their own language when needed as a bridge to other learning.***

Language rights are recognized as being integral to the survival of cultural identity and heritage. Literacy in one's first language strengthens one's culture, contributes to pride and self-esteem. As a society, we should value the languages people speak and be aware of the cross-cultural benefits of a multilingual/multicultural society.

The promotion of French literacy programs was recognized in the 1986 Government Plan for ABL. The growth of these programs has demonstrated the need, and programs should continue to be offered in French. Ontario is recognized as a leader in this field.

There are many aboriginal languages spoken in Ontario. Some of the major ones are Ojibway, Cree, Oji-Cree, Mohawk, Cayuga and Oneida. As Native literacy programs emerge, there are requests for literacy in aboriginal languages. Current operational policy allows only bilingual, i.e. English and Native language, programming. In some parts of the province, the aboriginal language is dominant. In other cases, people may speak one of the official languages, but want to learn the language of their ancestors.

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[1] *ASL = American Sign Language; LSQ = Langue des Signes Quebecois.*

The Deaf community may be regarded as a Special Needs group. American or Quebec sign language, however, are considered first languages. One of the reasons why the Deaf community is not integrated currently with mainstream programs is because of the lack of qualified interpreters. Sign language is essential to the participation of the Deaf in literacy education, whether in mainstream or in customized programs.

Immigrants in need of language training have difficulties with official language literacy if they are illiterate in their own language. Attempts must be made to offer first language literacy, where appropriate, as a bridge to official language literacy; otherwise these adults may never be able to fully participate in Canadian society.

Issues

- **Should literacy programs be the vehicle for francophones to learn French ("refrancisation") or Native people to learn aboriginal languages as second languages? Or, should there be other appropriate vehicles for these activities?**
- **When is an ESL/FSL learner a literacy learner?**
- **Should literacy programs continue to accept what appears to be an overflow of ESL learners because of inadequate language training programs? Should bridge programs between ESL and literacy programs be developed?**
- **How can literacy programs provide the Deaf community with a choice of programs?**

5.3 DIVERSE AND FLEXIBLE PROGRAMS

Adult learners should be entitled to a variety of programs delivered by a range of agencies that respond to their individual needs and learning styles.

No single delivery system can meet all adult needs. There has to be a variety of appropriate options. One strength of program provision in Ontario to date has been the richness in program diversity. This should be maintained and encouraged.

The options include: one-to-one tutoring; small group work; classes offered for one or two hours a week, on a more substantial part-time basis in mornings, afternoons and evenings, and full-time. There are many hybrid arrangements offered by literacy providers. Instruction takes place in community sites, in libraries, in schools, in colleges, in the workplace and in homes.

Program diversity should reflect natural proportion of the population of all people who would benefit from literacy instruction. People with a variety of disabilities should have the same range of options as other literacy learners.

Issues

- **How, with constrained fiscal resources, can a diverse delivery system with quality programming be fostered and maintained?**
- **How can duplication of services in some communities be avoided?**
- **To what extent can options be made available in rural and remote areas, and for Francophone or other minority groups? Can technology help overcome gaps in delivery infrastructure?**
- **What options exist for people with a variety of disabilities? How can we support integration into "mainstream" literacy programs?**
- **How clearly defined and understood are the mandates of the various programs funded by the Ministry - OBS, OBSW, OCL, ILC, ABL in school boards, FUTURES?**
- **Where are the interfaces between ESL/FSL literacy and "mainstream" literacy programs?**
- **How do we ensure that all program providers take responsibility for including even the students who are the most challenging to serve?**
- **How do these various programs fit together with each other from the client's perspective? Are there gaps? Are there duplications? To what extent is the work done and the goals achieved recognized by other providers and employers?**
- **Where options exist, the learner's right to choose the most appropriate option for his/her learning needs should be respected.**

5.4 SUPPORT SERVICES

Adults should be entitled to appropriate support services to ensure equity of outcome.

Entitlement to access becomes an empty entitlement unless the systemic barriers to participation are removed. Such barriers for adults include costs of child care, transportation costs, lack of transportation in rural and remote areas, lack of income support while attending programs, physical barriers for people with disabilities, costs of attendant care, and costs of assistive devices.

As well as financial and physical barriers, there are personal and attitudinal barriers. Overworked literacy practitioners often cannot or do not want to take the extra time required to accommodate people with special needs. Other students may not want to be associated with people with disabilities. Adults who have been stigmatized for much of their lives, fear further stigmatization by association. Practitioners and learners may need opportunities to openly discuss their assumptions and prejudices.

Adults are also entitled to information and counselling services on education, training, and employment. Adult learners are often not given credit for life experiences and achievements in other programs. Prior learning should be recognized.

Issues

- **What proportion of program budgets/grants from the Ministry of Education should go to the provision of support services to increase access? Or, should provision of support services be the responsibility of other ministries?**

- **What training resources exist for practitioners to become familiar with ways of working with learners who have disabilities? What resources and training opportunities are still needed?**

- **How can local providers link with other literacy providers and social support agencies in their communities to make right of access a reality?**

- **What are the responsibilities of the regional and local literacy networks as agents of referral, assessment, information and career counselling?**

- **How can learners be helped to move along the continuum of literacy skills? Where are the transitions and bridging points? What needs to be done to make the transitions easier for learners?**

- **How will the establishment of a new body such as the Ontario Training and Adjustment Board affect transition between programs and services?**

5.5 FIELD DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

- ***Practitioners[1] working in the literacy field require a range of program support services in order to provide quality adult programs.***

- ***Outreach and recruitment are vital components of adult literacy work and should be supported.[2]***

Adult literacy work as a field of practice is relatively new, especially with regard to community literacy. Community groups form in response to local needs. They can more readily reach people where they live and work. Some educational institutions also do community outreach work, but internal administrative structures within institutions may not always favour this kind of activity. Facilitators of community groups and practitioners working in community settings are freer to experiment with different approaches and ideas. They are often on the cutting edge of initiatives in outreach work and instructional approaches.

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[1] *Practitioners is used in a generic sense to include all those working in literacy (instructors, teachers, tutors, aides, volunteers, coordinators etc.)*

[2] *Research has shown that less than 5 percent of adults with literacy difficulties actually enrol in literacy programs.*

The Literacy Branch has given leadership to the field in developing innovative pilot projects and programs in a variety of settings. Support has also been given to the development of resources, regional and local networks, and provincial coalitions. The professional development needs of some workers have also been partially met through the establishment of special interest groups and the holding of workshops and seminars.

In addition to professional development, much program development work still needs to be done in remote communities, in rural areas, and some neighbourhoods of large cities. It is not enough just to advertise courses. Experience and research have shown that word-of-mouth among potential learners is the most effective way of reaching learners. Developmental work takes time and resources. These facts should be recognized.

Issues

- Now that there is an emerging infrastructure of networks and coalitions in the literacy field, what are:
  - the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and the field in ensuring quality programming and
  - what are the appropriate roles for each in development and support activities?
- How can practitioner training and professional development work be implemented and supported so that literacy practitioners from institutions and the community can be included?
- Should a means of recognizing qualifications and providing accreditation for literacy practitioners in various delivery sectors be developed?
- How can the activities of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) be communicated to others and made more inclusive?
- Given a commitment to equity of outcome, and the present period of fiscal restraint, should outreach and field development work be initiated in areas of need where there are no or few literacy services, or should resources be concentrated in areas with existing programs?
- Who should be responsible for the program development and outreach work at the local level?

- **How can new literacy resources and materials be made known and distributed to programs?**

5.6 SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

> ***The multi-faceted nature of literacy provision demands a shared responsibility between different sectors of government, as well as between communities, business and labour.***

While the diversity of literacy providers is a strength, it can also be a weakness. Many of the providers evolved in different ways at different times, and many of them work in isolation from each other and from other agencies. Services in this context appear to be fragmented and confusing to potential learners. In some communities, however, useful models of cooperative relationships are beginning to emerge. To avoid unnecessary duplications and to improve services for the benefit of learners, government and communities need to examine ways in which responsibilities can be shared and cooperative approaches implemented among the various sectors and at various levels. Such initiatives are critical in times of fiscal restraint.

Issues

- **How can the Ministry of Education's financial resources be restructured so that adult literacy is funded in a more consistent and equitable manner and duplications of service are avoided?**
- **What are the responsibilities of other ministries to contribute to the support of literacy services to their clients?**
- **Should the government commit itself to multi-year planning and funding, rather than annual discretionary funding, for current programs?**
- **What should be the responsibilities of the National Literacy Secretariat and Employment and Immigration Canada in the funding of literacy services?**
- **How can adult literacy programs services within the Ministry of Education itself be better coordinated and integrated?**

- Can local educational institutions work with community literacy groups without infringing on the autonomy of community programs?

- What are the responsibilities of local literacy providers and representatives of local social and support agencies to work together on planning, promotion and coordination of literacy services in their communities?

- How can the private sector be encouraged to contribute to literacy provision as an investment in their economic future?

- What are the responsibilities of employers to provide literacy training and paid educational leave for their employees?

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September 11, 1991

APPENDIX I

A. Literacy and Skills Training Programs Funded Through the Ministry of Education

PROGRAM					
PROGRAM NAME	**FUNDER**	**DELIVERER**	**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**	**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**	**EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED**
Ontario Basic Skills	Ministry of Education	Colleges of applied arts and technology. Some colleges may co-operate with local community based programs and school boards.	Equip workers with job-entry and basic literacy and numeracy skills through Grade 12. To acquire necessary level to qualify for further upgrading under federal sponsorship; to acquire the necessary upgrading to enter skills training programs; to enter employment. Residents of, and eligible to work in Ontario; 25 years of age or older. (Exceptions to age minimum allowed in some situations.)	An individualized training plan that may include: academic learning, including career and technical skills; hands-on exposure to computers, shop tools, and machinery; work adjustment skills; job search skills; academic upgrading from basic to Grade 12, including reading, writing communication, basic math and science.	Special support allowances (SSA) that support child care, travel, and accommodation* for low income trainees. * If trainee must relocate to participate.
Ontario Basic Skills in the Workplace	Ministry of Education	Colleges of applied arts and technology, school boards, community groups, unions, community-industrial training councils, employers.	To improve ability of organizations to respond to technological change and other pressures; to prepare workers to reach full potential.	Basic skills training to employees at the work site: reading, writing, basic math and science skills. Language training (ESL/FSL) Funding to labour, employers, and deliverers acting as agents of employers to deliver progams in the workplace. 1989-90 and 1990-91 project funding was provided to deliverers to develop expertise and models, materials, etc.	Consultation, training of trainers, and resource development and distribution.

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PROGRAM					
PROGRAM NAME	**FUNDER**	**DELIVERER**	**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**	**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**	**EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED**
Ontario Community Literacy	Ministry of Education	Community agencies.	To provide community-based Adult Basic Literacy/Numeracy programs and services for Ontario residents who are English and French speaking; Natives; learners with disabilities and other target groups. To support provincial and regional umbrella groups providing services, such as hotlines. Also supports research, materials development, and start-up projects.	Eligible items include: salaries and benefits for co-ordination; outreach and publicity; volunteer recruitment; orientation, supervision and training; small group facilitation; user counselling, referral and registration; child care in group settings and ongoing program operating expenses.	Consultative support and training for community-based programs. Networking activities, including the development of special interest groups. Resources, for practitioners.
Literacy Field Development and Support	Ministry of Education	Literacy Branch staff. Umbrella organizations.	To support field development, including resource development and distribution, data base, practitioner training, computer networks (English and French), networking through special interest groups, and other activities to enhance literacy programs and services.	To ensure that literacy deliverers and practitioners in Ontario have opportunities to train, network, and share resources and models so that the field develops and maintains a high level of innovation and expertise and learners have access to high quality programs and instruction.	Objective of program is support to the field.
Adult Basic Literacy/ Numeracy	Ministry of Education	School Boards.	To provide literacy/ numeracy training for English-/French-speaking learners up to Grade 8 competency.	These programs, which school boards may offer on a volunteer basis, can be delivered through a variety of models including classroom settings or partnerships with local literacy councils or colleges. Course content may be developed to meet individual needs. No criteria for client acceptance.	None.

PROGRAM					
PROGRAM NAME	**FUNDER**	**DELIVERER**	**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**	**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**	**EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED**
Adult Basic Literacy	Ministry of Education	Independent Learning Centre	To provide literacy/numeracy training to adults 16 years of age or older who are Canadian citizens, landed immigrants; Ontario residents holding work visas, diplomatic visas or ministerial permits.	Correspondence course in Adult Basic Literacy and Adult Basic English (non-credits). The first course requires a volunteer tutor.	Qualified teacher provides additional professional instruction by phone.
FUTURES (includes PEP; PT/PT; GO only)	Ministry of Education	Youth employment counselling centres and colleges of applied arts and technology.	To assist unemployed and employment-disadvantaged 16-to 24-years old youth to make a successful transition to the labour market.	Counselling, skills, and educational upgrading and work experience. Pre-employment Preparation(PEP): life skills and academic upgrading. One Year Guarantee (GO): one year guarantee of work experience in return for 3 hours/week educational upgrading (minimum 1 credit per year). Part-Time Work/Part-time School (PT/PT): one half day on the job training (minimum 3 credits).	PEP: $125/week stipend GO: minimum wage PT/PT: $100/week for school stipend; minimum wage on the job
Literacy	Ministry of Correctional Services; Ministry of Education	Provincial Schools Authority; School Boards		Basic education programs at young offender detention sites in co-operation with school boards. Basic education programs delivered by school boards and community groups to inmates in detention centres, jails and correctional centres. Basic education by teachers employed by Ministry of Correctional Services in institutions.	Community program staff in Probation and Parole Services facilitate linkages with a wide variety of support agencies and services. In 1990/91, a series of workshops were held across the province to introduce literacy deliverers and practitioners to issues related to offenders. In 1991/92, funding for pilot projects to serve offenders is being provided through the federal/provincial funding stream of the National Literacy Secretariat.

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B. Literacy and Skills Training Program Funded through the Ministry of Colleges and Universities

Appendix I (cont'd)

PROGRAM					
PROGRAM NAME	**FUNDER**	**DELIVERER**	**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**	**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**	**EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED**
General Academic Upgrading	Ministry of Colleges and Universities Employment and Immigration Canada	Colleges of applied arts and technology	To provide employment and skill-related literacy training as preparation for further post secondary education or employment.	Programs such as Basic Training and Skill Development (BTSD) and Basic Job Readiness Training (BJRT) focus on increasing adult learners' academic skills in reading, writing, numeracy, communications, and life skills. Programs range from 8 to 52 weeks in duration with an average of 24 hours per week of instruction. All colleges of applied arts and technology offer programs in the academic upgrading area. Note: This program brings students to a point where they can enter a college post secondary program.	None.
Remedial Literacy	Ministry of Colleges and Universities	Colleges of applied arts and technology	To provide remedial training in English, language skills, communications, math, and sciences as an upgrading of learners' skills for students in college post secondary programs. Note: This program brings students to a point where they can enter a college post secondary program.	Remedial training is provided in a number of formats. Programs range from 10 to 60 weeks in length, with an average of 3-5 hours of instruction per week. Teaching methods include group instruction and individual tutorial.	None

PROGRAM					
PROGRAM NAME	**FUNDER**	**DELIVERER**	**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**	**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**	**EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES PROVIDED**
Vocational Preparatory Training Programs	Ministry of Colleges and Universities Employment and Immigration Canada	Colleges of applied arts and technology	To provide instruction for the upgrading of vocational skills of adult learners in preparation for entry into college technology and trades program and the workforce.	Programs provide a combination of academic and technical subjects as a preparation for technology training. Courses offer upgrading of needed skills and an orientation to the problem-solving and technical methods needed in the trades.	None.
Preparatory Programs for Special Population Groups	Ministry of Colleges and Universities	Colleges of applied arts and technology	To provide employment and skill related instruction to adult members of special populations in preparation for entry into college programs and/or the workforce.	Colleges of applied arts and technology offer training programs, from 4 to 52 weeks in length, for students with learning disabilities, deaf and hearing-impaired students, Native peoples, Francophones, and women. Training covers returning to work, career planning and changes, college preparation, and job readiness skills.	None.

Note: Not included in this program appendix are the many language training programs for newcomers in official language and second dialect literacy. These programs are funded separately from ABL, but many are delivered by the same agents and there are program overlaps.

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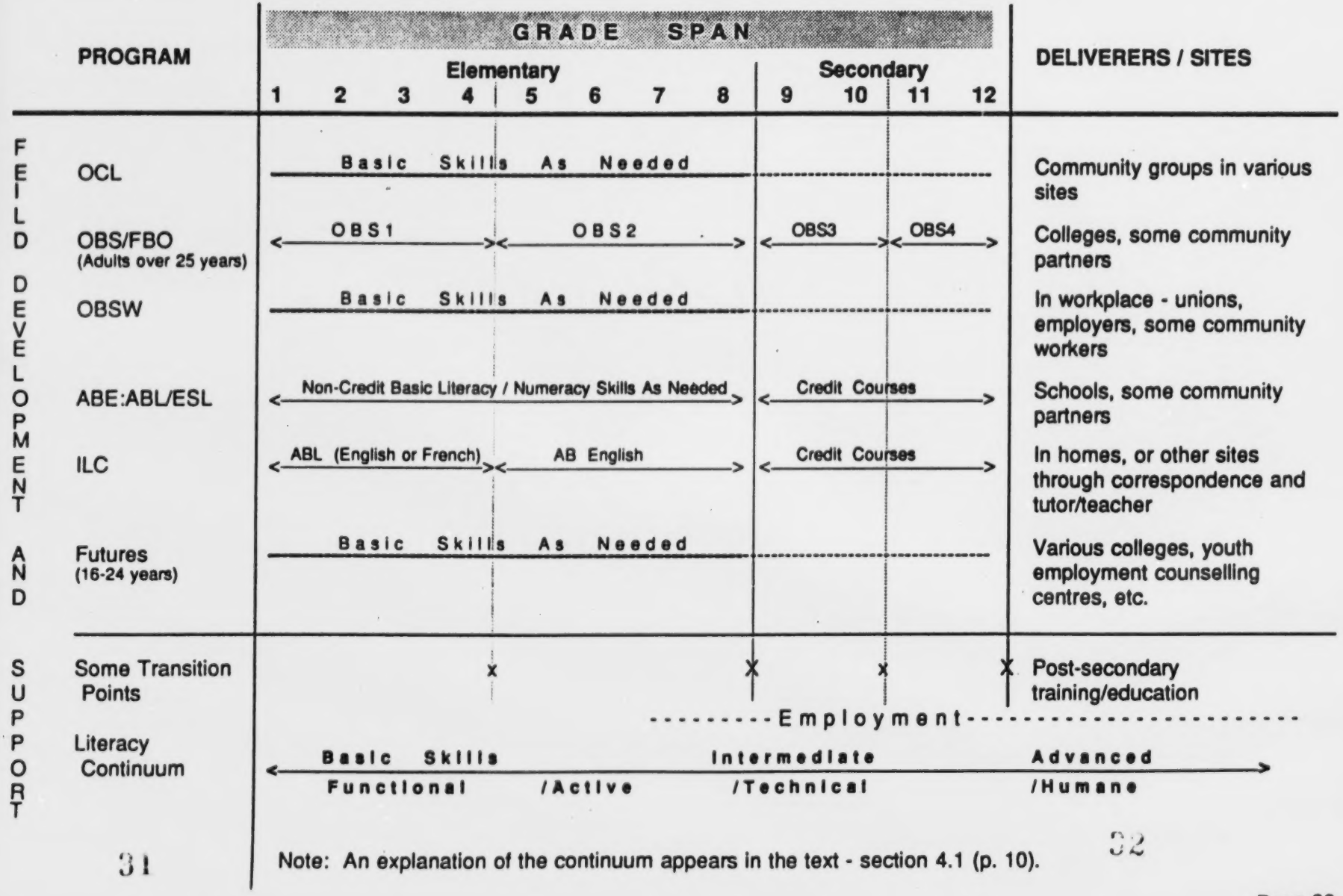
October 22, 1991

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION FUNDED ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS



Note: An explanation of the continuum appears in the text - section 4.1 (p. 10).

APPENDIX III

Program Issues Identified During Consultations

- Definition of mandates and boundaries of the different literacy programs.
- Linkages between programs, networks, SIGs.
- Learners should have choice of program.
- Learners choice should be respected.
- Duplication of program offerings and double funding in some communities.
  - Colleges and school boards have no access to OCL for community projects so have to set up community group to access OCL funds.
  - Who are the agents of publicly funded programs?
  - Role of colleges in community literacy.
- Provision of community literacy services to those not enrolled in programs - help with filling out forms, information, etc.
- Arbitrary grade cut-offs in school board programs meaningless and disappoint learners when they can't handle credit courses.
- Bridges between ESL, ESL/literacy and ABE (academic upgrading)/OBS.
- Inadequate programs for ESL/FSL population.
- Distinguish between learner-centredness and individualized instruction which is program/curriculum based.
- Participation of learners in processes and decision-making (more than involvement).
- Training of practitioners in community groups
  - how to cope with people with a variety of disabilities
  - how to manage instructional needs of second language learners
  - how to fund-raise and manage a financially autonomous community group.
- Training of volunteers.
- Professional development opportunities needed for literacy workers in all settings - colleges, school boards, community groups. Set up dialogue between different literacy providers.

. Accreditation of practitioners
- recognition of prior experience in adult education/literacy
- equity issues
  . instructors/teachers
  . different pay scales
  . lack of benefits
- field should shape accreditation process
- OTC should offer adult education option which would recognize literacy core knowledge, literacy experience, literacy specialities.

. Prior learning of students
- more work on learner assessment
- need to know more about tools available, what they are trying to measure, what they say.

. Initial assessment of learners.

. Exit procedures/interviews etc. as important as "intake" accomplishments, future paths.

. Quality program issues - identify and promote principles.

. Workplace/workforce literacy vs. literacy in the workplace.

. Principles of good practice in workplace literacy - emergent criteria.

. How to monitor/evaluate programs with no curriculum guidelines (all situations).

. OBSW offers ESL and ABL - unique in Literacy Branch.

. Level of employer involvement in workplace initiatives.

. OBS - is a skills program of which language skills are only one component
- relationship with AU/BTSD programs
- relationship with remedial literacy programs
- differentiation of faculty - status, pay etc.
- formula funding rather than annual grants
- integrated curriculum for province
- recognition of OBS 4 as equivalent to OSSD
- seen as financial sponsorship rather than an actual program (content/curriculum based)
- interface with OBSW
- interface with ESL - mandate, role
- UI recipients can only access programs in 25 hour block
- college instructors isolated from literacy field.

- ABL in school boards
  - no curriculum guidelines
  - not mandatory for school boards
  - no allowances for professional development and preparation time of instructors
  - some boards require OTC, others do not.

- Program Evaluation - need for
  - use of statistics - enrollment; achievements;
  - qualitative criteria to include increased level of learner independence

- Accountability different from evaluation

- Funding - streamline processes to avoid duplications
  - put money where does most good
  - help community groups to do what they do well
  - fund everyone in similar way (complicated by school board autonomy and relation to local tax base)
  - B6 Memo needs revamping - relationships between school boards and community groups and different philosophies.
  - SAR funding to run out 1992
  - discretionary nature of OCL, OBS and OBSW funding and literacy field development and support
  - long-term commitment - 3 to 5 year funding plan after probationary period
  - stable, ongoing funding needed in order to plan intelligently, much time and energy wasted each year at grant time
  - community literacy programs view programs in holistic way, workers are teachers, counsellors, economic development officers, etc. simultaneously - burnout is a problem.
  - formula funding for everyone
  - numbers have increased, grants have decreased
  - no cap to grants to school boards
  - bring school boards in line with other programs.

APPENDIX IV

Discussions were held with the following people:

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, LITERACY BRANCH

Harold Alden
English Literacy Coordinator

Arthur Bull
Manager, Program Development

Betty Butterworth
Senior Manager, Program & Policy

Priscilla George
Native Literacy Program Coordinator

Ed Godden
Manager, Program Support Unit

Richard Hudon
French Literacy Coordinator

Joyce King
Manager, Financial Support Unit

Penny Lawler
Manager, Policy Development

Liz Marston
Program Officer, OBS

Tracy Odell
Literacy Access Coordinator

Ann Whalen
Director

OTHER BRANCHES OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Cynthia Adams
Curriculum Policy Branch

Ethel Anderson
Independent Learning Centre

Sante Mauti
Youth Employment Services Branch

Dr. Sandra Wolfe
Executive Assistant to Assistant Deputy Minister,
Learning Programs Division

MINISTRY OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Marion Langford
Consultant, Partnership Development Branch

NON-MINISTRY PEOPLE

Audrey Anderson, Chair
Practitioner Training Special Interest Group, Sudbury

Linda Berger, Coordinator of ABE, Lambton County Board of Education

Mary Collins, Past-President
Laubach Literacy of Canada, Barrie

Naomi Garber
Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy

Ruth Gates, Vice-President Community Services, Fanshawe College, London

Florence Gray, President
Ontario Native Literacy Coalition

Sandra Hennessey
Continuing Access Division, Fanshawe College, London

Miria Ioannou
Director of Programs, Frontier College, Toronto

Claire Kaukinen
Chair, Communication Arts, Confederation College, Thunder Bay

Joan Lawton, President
Laubach Literacy Ontario, Waterloo

Donna Lunau, Assistant Literacy Coordinator, Toronto Public Library

Dina McGowan, Director
Tri-County Literacy Council, Cornwall

John McLaughlin, Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy

Almyra Namaro, Past-President, Laubach Literacy Ontario, Hamilton

Mary Oliver, Coordinator of ABE, London Board of Education

John D. O'Leary, President
Frontier College, Toronto

Anne Osborne, Director
Literacy Link of Eastern Ontario, Kingston

Grace Scheel, Coordinator
Literacy Services, Toronto Public Library

Marian Sinn, Outreach Coordinator OBS and Coordinator OBSW, Algonquin College, Smiths Falls

Joyce Wabano, Literacy Coordinator
Moosonee Friendship Centre

Gladys Watson, Manager
Alpha Ontario, Toronto

Tracy Westell
Ontario Literacy Coalition, Toronto

Joyce White, ABE Coordinator
Ottawa Board of Education

Mary Wiggin, Director
Ottawa-Carleton Coalition for Literacy

Dorothy Zicard, Director
Worker Education Centre, Hamilton